



"Green Cities" the focus at World Environment Day 2005

For the first time since its inception in 1972, United Nations' World Environment Day was in North America this year -- San Francisco, to be exact. And, for the first time the theme and focus of the event was "greening cities." Dozens of mayors around the world, including Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels, attended to compare notes on how to keep the world's cities healthy and livable. Mayor Nickels was one of 50 mayors to sign the San Francisco Urban Environmental Accords, an agreement to strive toward 21 environmental goals in areas ranging from solid waste reduction to food security. For more information on World Environment Day and the Accords, please visit <http://www.wed2005.org/>

"What can I do to help sustain Seattle?!"

Do you want to know what your family and household can do to protect and improve Seattle's air, climate, water and landscapes? Are you wondering which actions are most likely to make the biggest difference in keeping Seattle healthy, green and livable? Check out [Green Seattle Guide: 101 actions for a Healthy Urban Environment](#). This new guide describes and ranks 101 actions you can take in your home, in your yard, when you shop, on the move, and in your community. The guide, produced through a partnership of City departments and regional agencies, is available both in [hard-copy \(PDF\)](#) and [web-based formats](#).

Mayor's Center City Strategy takes shape

One key to sustaining local and regional environmental quality and quality-of-life is to channel much of the expected growth in people, homes and jobs into compact, livable communities in our existing urban centers. Research shows that this kind of development reduces emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions by close to 30 percent, compared to sprawl-type development. This is one of the driving forces behind [Mayor Nickels' Center City Strategy](#), which is beginning to take shape in the form of specific policy changes. For example, the Mayor has proposed a number of changes to downtown zoning regulations that promote mixed-use, transit-oriented development; affordable housing; and green building. In addition, the Mayor recently proposed impact fees on new development in the city's fastest-growing urban centers to help pay for much needed additions to the public open space network.

Urban Green – A resource for sustainable development

Urban Green (formerly the Sustainable Development Center) is moving from concept to reality. The goal of Urban Green is to bring together and publicize information, educational opportunities, and examples of sustainable products to foster the adoption of more sustainable approaches to the built environment. The first center of its kind in the Puget Sound region, Urban Green will be open to the general public, but the main users are anticipated to be design professionals (e.g., architects, builders, engineers) as well as owners, contractors, and developers. For more information, please contact acting Executive Director Mike Cox at (206) 684-5518.

! Check it Out

A Bay Area company called [SustainLane](#) compared [25 U.S. cities](#) against about 12 sustainability criteria. Seattle ranked 4th, behind San Francisco, Portland, and Berkeley.

The [Cascade Land Conservancy](#) in May released [The Cascade Agenda](#), a 100-year strategy for preserving 1.3 million acres of natural and working landscapes in the Central Puget Sound region.

The Urban Sustainability Forum -- a [series of public talks](#) featuring leading sustainable development thinkers, authors, and practitioners from across the country and the globe, continues to draw large crowds.

Seattle is one of [four U.S. cities](#) that will be featured in the PBS program ["Edens Lost & Found"](#), a four-hour public television series that will highlight practical solutions and models for urban sustainability.

What are Seattle's B.E.S.T. businesses? The Chamber of Commerce's Resource Venture recently announced [the winners](#) of its 2005 Businesses for an Environmentally Sustainable Tomorrow (B.E.S.T.) awards.

Launched in 2004, the [Green Seattle Partnership](#) is working to restore 2,500 acres of forested parklands by 2025. To date they have restored 37 acres, and planted over 4,000 seedlings in area parks. For more information contact: Tracy Morgenstern at (206) 386-4595.

Feature Story

Mayor's Climate Initiative Gains Traction, Garners Attention

More than 175 mayors representing nearly 40 million people in 38 states have signed onto the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement initiated earlier this year by Mayor Greg Nickels. Participating mayors agree to strive toward the global warming pollution cutting target of the Kyoto Protocol, and to advocate for stronger climate protection policies at the state and federal level. Meanwhile, Mayor Nickels' Green Ribbon Commission is busy developing a strategy for meeting the global warming pollution-cutting goals of the Kyoto Protocol here in Seattle.

Dozens of mayors answer the call

When Mayor Nickels launched the US Mayors Climate Agreement last February 16, he set a goal to recruit at least 141 mayors to join in the effort; that was the number of countries that, at the time, had ratified the international Kyoto Protocol. As of September 1, 178 mayors have signed onto the Agreement, including mayors of 12 of the country's 25 largest cities. In June, the US Conference of Mayors, which represents more than 1,100 municipalities, unanimously endorsed the Agreement. Implementation of the Agreement was a major topic at the Sundance Summit on Climate Protection, a gathering of about 50 mayors hosted by Robert Redford in July. The City is working with the US Conference of Mayors and the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) on next steps.

Mayor's Green Ribbon Commission gets busy

Had the US signed the Kyoto Protocol it would have required greenhouse gas emissions reductions of seven percent below 1990 levels by 2012 – which is the target Mayor Nickels set for Seattle. But community-wide emissions here in the Puget Sound region are projected to increase by close to 40% by 2030, given current trends. How will we stop – let alone reverse - that trajectory?

That is the challenge facing the Mayor's recently appointed Green Ribbon Commission on Climate Protection, co-chaired by Bullitt Foundation president Denis Hayes and retired Starbucks Coffee Company president Orin Smith. Since most of the global warming pollution in Seattle comes from transportation (cars, planes, trains, trucks, boats, etc) and natural gas used for industry and home heating, they will be the main focus of the Commission recommendations. But solid waste management, forest management, and cross cutting actions (e.g., state and federal rules, financial policies, collaborations with other cities that have signed the Agreement, etc) will also get attention. And of course, education and outreach will be a major element. The Commission's report is due to the Mayor early next year. For more information on the Seattle Climate Protection Initiative, call Kim Drury at 684-3214, or visit www.seattle.gov/mayor/climate.

Facts and Figures

University of California (San Diego) Professor Naomi Oreskes reviewed a sample of 928 peer-reviewed research papers on climate disruption; 100% support the consensus view that a significant fraction of recent climate change is due to human activities.

According to a recent PIPA-Knowledge Networks poll, 81% of Americans support federal legislation to reduce U.S. emissions of greenhouse gases to year 2000 levels by 2010, and to 1990 levels by 2020.

From 2000 to 2010, Seattle's population grew by six percent, while our use of gasoline increased by 18%, natural gas consumption increased by 26%, and diesel use increased by 39%.

According to the King County Land Use Transportation Air Quality Health (LUTAQH) study, residents of the most compact, densely populated parts of the region generate 28% less miles of car travel (and car-related pollution) than their suburban counterparts.

The "clean car bill" passed by the Washington state legislature earlier this year is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from new cars by 30% by 2016.

An energy lifecycle study completed by the US Department of Energy concluded that biodiesel can reduce CO2 emissions by as much as 78% over petroleum diesel.